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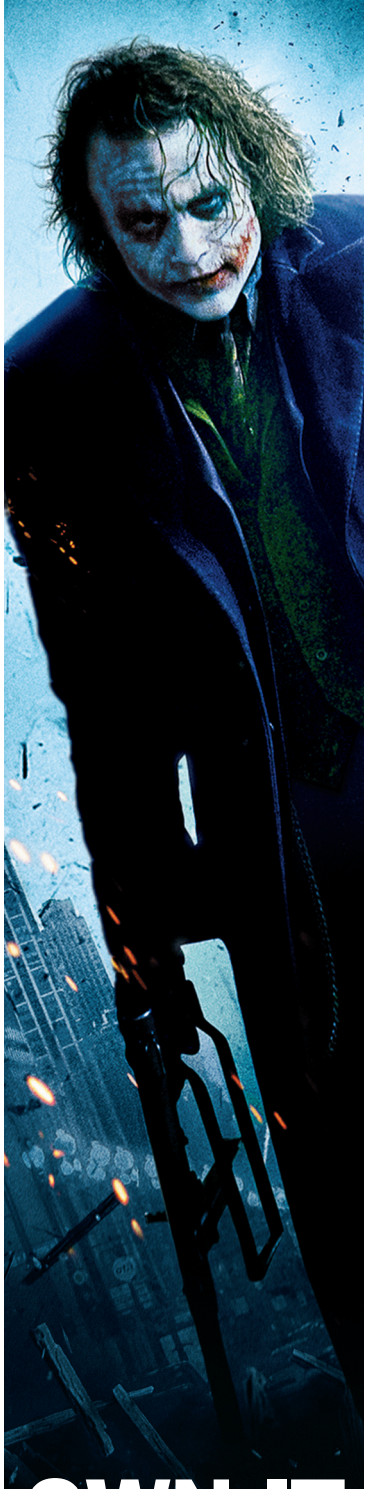

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VANCOUVER • TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2008 metronews.ca

Celebrity Buzz

Lily Allen renounces partying ways
pg 18

JEFF HODSON/METRO VANCOUVER

Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson is given the chain of office by provincial court Judge William F.W. Yee. The inauguration ceremony was held at the Sunset Community Centre in South Vancouver yesterday.

Kilted Robertson sworn in as mayor

Main objective to end homelessness in city

JEFF HODSON
jeff.hodson@metronews.ca

Mayor Gregor Robertson reaffirmed that ending homelessness is the top priority of his new council at his inauguration ceremony in Vancouver yesterday.

"Homelessness flies in the face of everything we were taught about compassion and our duty to each other," said Robertson, who wore a kilt to the ceremony at the Sunset Community Centre in South Vancouver.

"Homelessness is everything our aspiration for Vancouver isn't. It abandons our neighbours, it disempowers our people and does anything but inspire the world."

Robertson, who has set a goal of eliminating homelessness by 2015, plans to take a number of steps, including ensuring that there are enough shelter spaces so that people are not sleeping outside.

He also wants to increase outreach, protect the city's existing stock of rental housing and ensure treatment for addicts and people with mental illness.

Civil City ending

- Sam Sullivan's Project Civil City, a program that aimed to reduce street disorder and public drug use, will be "phased out as quickly as possible" by the new council, Robertson said.

The long-term solution is to create new affordable housing, he said.

Robertson, who was sworn to office while wearing his clan's Robertson hunting tartan by provincial court Judge William F.W. Yee, will announce today the first steps the new council will take to fight homelessness.

"I've had a series of good, constructive conversations with both the premier and minister Coleman," said Robertson, following the ceremony, which was emceed by Parks chair Raj Hundal.

"I'm looking forward to working together. I think we have a lot of shared concerns and objectives for the City of Vancouver. We're going to roll up our sleeves and get things done."

Dion bids adieu via e-mail

POLITICS It ended with an e-mail. After a weekend when even loyalists began musing publicly that it was time for him to go, Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion had his office issue a statement that reiterated his intention to resign as soon as his successor is chosen — but this time a whole lot earlier than before.

Dion had originally planned to resign in May when his successor was supposed to be chosen. But now he says a new leader needs to be in place before a Jan. 27 vote on the budget. His successor could be chosen as early as tomorrow. Dion took credit for Prime Minister Stephen Harper having backed down from some of the more partisan measures in his recent economic update and for negotiating the Bloc-supported coalition that scared him into doing it.

"I believe that decision was the right one and I am proud of having forced Stephen Harper to back away from his attempt to force upon Canadians his most ideological and harmful plans in these tough economic times," Dion wrote. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

MORE COVERAGE PAGE 4

VIDEO What does Dion's departure mean for the Liberal party's future at metronews.ca/canada

ShareYourViews
vancouverletters@metronews.ca

Entertainment pg16

Nico ready for more dancin'

Please recycle

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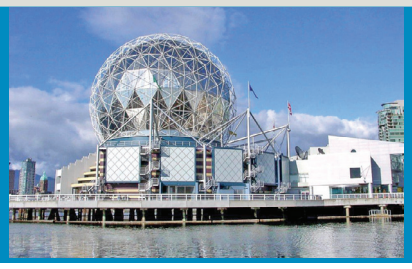
Pantages giving gift of petitions
The Pantages Theatre Art Society is giving city council Christmas gifts today in the form of petitions supporting the refurbishment of the theatre. The board's president is presenting the gift-wrapped copies in a Santa hat. METRO VANCOUVER

Local



Science World gets boost

Science World, left, is receiving $10.5 million from the B.C. government to undergo upgrades and develop an outdoor science park. The proposed 7,803-square-metre park will be used to explore themes of science and sustainability, such as clean energy, earth science and water stewardship.
METRO VANCOUVER

'Irony' to Salvation theft

JEFF HODSON
jeff.hodson@metronews.ca

JEFF HODSON/METRO VANCOUVER
Salvation Army Maj. Brian Venables displays some of the toys stolen last week from the organization's warehouse in East Vancouver.

Thieves who stole 80 boxes of toys from the Vancouver Salvation Army may have once also benefited from the charity, Vancouver police said yesterday after reclaiming 40 per cent of the stolen toys.

"The ironic part of this break-and-enter is that the people, the person or persons responsible for this theft are probably people who have been recipients of help from the Salvation Army," said Vancouver Const. Tim Fanning.

On Sunday afternoon, investigators met with people "from the other side of the tracks" and recovered 26 boxes of toys stolen Wednesday night from the Salvation Army warehouse in the 3200 block of Fraser Street.

Fanning said the people who helped return the toys are not suspects, but were "just as outraged as the rest of the community about this theft — Christmas hampers for the needy being stolen."

Six boxes were also recovered Friday during a police raid on a house in East Vancouver.

Three people were arrested and questioned in the raid, but no one was charged.

Salvation Army Maj. Brian Venables said it was sad that someone who may have benefited from the Salvation Army would be the one to steal from the charity. The Salvation Army in the Lower Mainland has received $100,000 in donations since.

Pickton conviction changed little: WISH

KRISTEN THOMPSON
kristen.thompson@metronews.ca

CRIME A year to the day since Robert Pickton was convicted of murdering six women from the Downtown Eastside, little has changed for sex trade workers, say some spokespeople for marginalized women.

Kate Gibson, with WISH, a drop-in centre for sex-trade workers in the area, said it's a misconception that violence against women there has subsided since Pickton's arrest.

Between 80 and 140 women seek refuge at WISH each night to escape violence or have somewhere safe to sleep.

"We have bad-date reports all the time," said Gibson.

But she said until people realize the immediate need for housing and act on that need, women will continue living dangerous lives to survive.

Claire Trevena, NDP critic for child care and women's Issues, added that these issues are compounded by the fact there's no provincial ministry for women.

"There's no central focus for women in this province, and there hasn't been in the last eight years," Trevena said.

"The question of prostitution … is not one that any one ministry would solve," she said.

"But … having one ministry would help focus and tackle (women's issues) more clearly."

Rally

- A rally in memory of Robert Pickton's victims is being held at 1 p.m. today at Crab Park in the Downtown Eastside.

metronews.ca
WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Video What does Dion's departure mean for the Liberal party's future at **metronews.ca/canada**

Read An interview with Arianna Huffington, the 2008 Media Person of the Year, at **metronews.ca/world**

Drop your politics, says councillor

KRISTEN THOMPSON
kristen.thompson@metronews.ca

POLITICS One of Mayor Gregor Robertsons's first orders of business should be to direct his councillors to stay out of federal politics for the sake of the city, NPA Coun. Suzanne Anton said yesterday.

Anton, noting that councillors Heather Deal and Geoff Meggs participated in an "anti-government rally" last week, said it's the duty of council to put the city first and politics second.

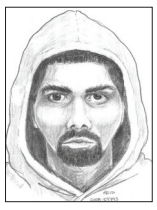
"How will it help Vancouver … campaigning against them?"
Suzanne Anton

"At a time when the federal government is proposing spending several billion dollars in infrastructure funds to stimulate the economy, how will it help Vancouver to have city councillors actively campaigning against them?" she asked.

"Vancouver needs to work co-operatively and respectfully with whoever is in government in Ottawa and Victoria."

News in brief

HOME INVASION Burnaby RCMP released a composite sketch yesterday of one of the men believed to be responsible for a home invasion and sexual assault on Sunday. Anyone with information is asked to call police.


Police sketch

BODY The RCMP is investigating the discovery of a body found yesterday in a water-filled ditch in Pitt Meadows. Cpl. Dale Carr said police are treating the death as a homicide.

SHOTS A 25-year-old Surrey man is recovering in hospital from non-life-threatening injuries after being shot three times in his car Sunday night. METRO VANCOUVER

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Explosive found in Edmonton Rona store
Police dismantled an explosive device found in a north Edmonton Rona store yesterday afternoon. Police would not elaborate on the situation except to say that the public was never in danger and that a person of interest is in custody. **CBC NEWS ONLINE**

Canada

'Pompous egghead'

Tapes of a conversation between former U.S. president Richard Nixon and former prime minister Pierre Trudeau, left, have been released publicly. The two-hour talk about trade between Canada and America took place on Dec. 6, 1971, and led Nixon to call Trudeau a "pompous egghead" and a "clever son of a bitch." CBC NEWS ONLINE

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Third time's a charm for Quebec Grits

MAJORITY Quebec's ruling Liberals strengthened their grip on power in a provincial election yesterday, winning their third straight mandate and a parliamentary majority and defeating separatists who want independence for the province.

Jean Charest's Liberals, who went into the vote with only 48 of the 125 seats in Quebec's legislature, won 66 seats.

Charest

Charest, who won a majority in 2003 and then barely hung onto power in a 2007 vote, called the election last month saying he needed a majority to deal with the economic crisis. REUTERS

Liberal 'coronation' comes under fire

Liberal Bob Rae is opposing what he calls the "coronation" of rival Michael Ignatieff, painting himself as the champion of democracy and calling for a party-wide vote to select the next Liberal leader.

Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion yesterday cleared the way for a fast-track leadership contest, pledging to step aside as soon as one is chosen.

That's expected tomorrow when Liberal MPs and senators meet behind closed doors to give their nod to Ignatieff.

But Rae is making it clear that he won't quietly end his leadership bid, despite mounting pressure to step aside and let Ignatieff take the crown unopposed.

"I don't think coronations are generally very successful in political parties ... Most people believe it's better to have a contest, it's better to have a choice," Rae told reporters in Toronto.

"What I'm proposing has a simple name — it's democracy," he said. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

MARK BLINCH/REUTERS

Bob Rae, left, is greeted by fellow Liberal MP Gerard Kennedy as he speaks yesterday in Toronto.

News in brief

HEALTH Ontario Auditor General Jim McCarter released a report yesterday saying the province needs to do a better job of ensuring safety of meat products by following up on food-safety violations in slaughterhouses and meat-processing plants.

ATTACK A favourite noisemaker at hockey games was wielded as a weapon at a matchup in western Newfoundland, CBC News Online reports. RCMP said a man blew an air horn into an ear of a 13-year-old boy during a game at De Grau on Friday night. A 25-year-old has been charged with assault and assault with a weapon.

OTTAWA The union for OC Transpo workers voted 98 per cent in favour of a strike last night after rejecting the latest offer from the municipal government. Workers could walk off the job as early as tomorrow, shutting the city's transit system. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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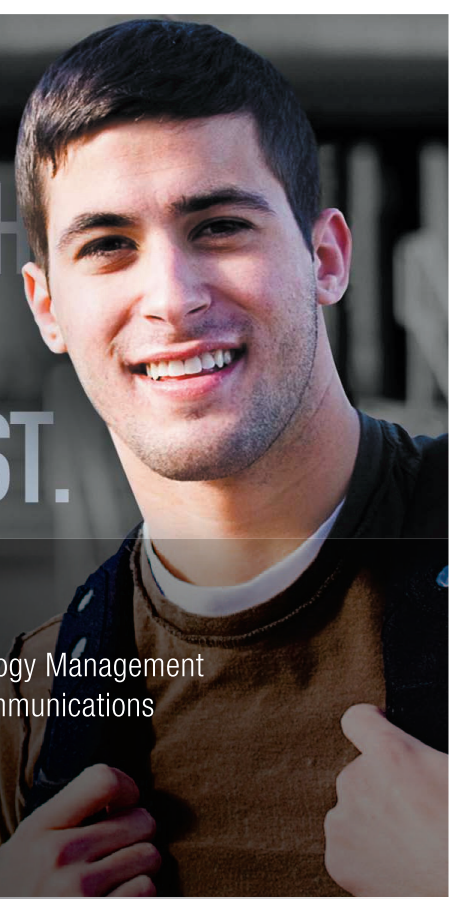
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China, Russia to join forces for satellite probes

China will team up with Russia to launch two satellite probes to take pictures of Mars and one of its small moons in October next year as it seeks to cement its place in the ranks of global space powers. A Chinese-built probe will piggy-back on a Russian-built rocket which will also carry a Russian satellite. REUTERS

World

Shopping rampage

A bull bought for the Muslim Eid al-Adha festival charged through a posh shopping mall in the Bangladesh capital of Dhaka yesterday, causing panic and damaging several shops. No one was hurt in the incident, which took place in the city's Gulshan diplomatic area. REUTERS

The Legend of Frosty
cbc.ca/holiday
Tonight at 8 CBC

Sept. 11 defendants ask to confess

GUANTANAMO The self-styled mastermind of the Sept. 11 attacks and four co-defendants said in a note to a military judge at Guantanamo yesterday they wanted to confess and plead guilty.

The note said the defendants made the decision on Nov. 4, which was the day Barack Obama was elected to become the next U.S. president.

Obama has said he will shut down the widely condemned Guantanamo prison camp and try detainees in the regular U.S. civilian or military courts.

Several of the defendants had said at previous hearings that they welcomed martyrdom, and they may have felt that opportunity slipping away with Obama's election.

The judge said he would question the five, including Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who has said he planned the Sept. 11 attacks "from A to Z," to ensure they understood their decision. All five could face the death penalty. REUTERS

Pilgrims take part in hajj stoning

SAUDI ARABIA More than two million Muslim pilgrims stoned walls symbolising the devil in a narrow valley outside Mecca in Saudi Arabia yesterday at the most dangerous stage of the hajj pilgrimage.

Pilgrims began three days of stoning and celebrated the first day of Eid al-Adha, commemorating the willingness of biblical patriarch Abraham to sacrifice his son for God.

Authorities made renovations to ease the flow of pilgrims at the bridge and asked pilgrims to throw stones at any time of day rather than in the afternoon, as Saudi clerics had insisted in the past. REUTERS

Previous deaths

- The bridge in the valley of Mena just outside Mecca has been the scene of a number of deadly stampedes. The last was in 2006 when 362 people were crushed to death.

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More riots likely in Greece

The funeral today of a teenager shot dead by police was expected to provoke more riots in Greece following three days of the country's worst unrest in decades.

The 15-year-old boy's killing on Saturday night has fanned public anger at unpopular economic policies and scandals as the global financial crisis reaches Greece.

Thousands of protesters burned and looted shops in central Athens and tear gas choked Syntagma Square outside the Greek parliament as police clashed with left-wing demonstrators yesterday.

More than 50 people have been hurt and scores of shops, banks and cars damaged. Police arrested about 150 people.

The shooting victim, Alexandros Grigoropoulos, will be buried today. Police were bracing for more violence around the funeral and during a general strike called for tomorrow.

The government condemned the incidents and denied reports it was planning to declare a state of emergency but Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis was due to meet the president and party leaders to discuss the crisis today.

Protests erupted in more than 10 cities across the nation. REUTERS

REUTERS/JOHN KOLESIDIS

A protester throws a stone at riot policemen yesterday outside of the main administrative building of the University of Athens. Thousands of protesters rampaged through the heart of Athens yesterday on a third day of riots sparked by the killing of a teenager by police.

Protesters aim for revolution

- The protests mark a "social revolution" that will last as long as is necessary, activist Panagiotis Sotiris said yesterday. "We ask for the ministers who are responsible for this to resign and we want to topple the government and its policies. The protests will last as long as necessary," he said.

Blackwater guards charged in deaths

IRAQ Five Blackwater security guards were charged yesterday with killing 14 unarmed civilians and wounding 20 others in a 2007 shooting in Baghdad that outraged Iraqis.

U.S. attorney Jeffrey Taylor said one of the victims was shot in the chest while standing with his hands up in the air while another victim was injured from a grenade fired into a nearby girls' school.

The U.S. justice department charged the men with 14 counts of manslaughter, 20 counts of attempt to commit manslaughter and one weapons violation count. The men could face 10 years in prison for each manslaughter charge, plus time for other charges.

"The government alleges in the documents unsealed today that at least 34 unarmed Iraqi civilians, including women and children, were killed or injured without justification or provocation by these Blackwater security guards in the shooting at Nisoor Square," said Patrick Rowan, assistant attorney general for national security.

A sixth guard pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter and attempt to commit manslaughter, the justice department said. REUTERS

Shooting

- The shooting occurred as the private security firm's guards escorted a heavily armed four-truck convoy of U.S. diplomats through Baghdad on Sept. 16, 2007.
- The guards, U.S. military veterans, were responding to a car bombing when shooting erupted in a crowded intersection.

News in brief

MEXICO The number of people killed in the country by drug violence has more than doubled this year to nearly 5,400 people and 2009 could be even worse, Attorney General Eduardo Medina Mora said yesterday. The official death toll of 5,376 for the year so far is higher than media estimates and more than twice the 2,477 people killed in the whole of 2007.

POLITICS U.S. president-elect Barack Obama will meet Nobel laureate and former vice-president Al Gore in Chicago today to discuss how energy and climate policies "can stimulate the economy and create jobs," a statement from Obama's office said. Obama is in the process of narrowing down picks for top energy and environment cabinet posts. Gore has indicated he is not interested in a position of climate "czar" or any cabinet post.

CRIME A prominent New York lawyer who heads the 250-attorney law firm Dreier LLP was charged yesterday with perpetrating a brazen, $100-million US real-estate investment fraud that targeted hedge funds. Marc Dreier faces federal charges of securities and wire fraud. REUTERS

India's ruling party takes 3 elections

VOTE India's ruling party won three of five state elections yesterday, defying predictions of a political battering after both an economic slowdown and attacks on Mumbai.

Final results were still being counted yesterday for two of the five state elections held over the last month, mostly in central and western India.

The votes come before national elections in 2009 that will pit a ruling Congress-led coalition against an opposition alliance led by the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The outcome is a boost for Congress, which has suffered a string of state election defeats against the BJP in the last year amid rising inflation and accusations of weak leadership.

It is a setback for the BJP, which had hoped its policy of accusing Congress of being soft on terrorism would reap political dividends. REUTERS

Royal Bank to offer $2.3B in stock
Royal Bank said yesterday it plans to issue up to $2.3 billion in common shares to bolster its regulatory capital ratio, in what would be the second-largest stock sale by a Canadian bank this year. Royal Bank said that it would issue 56.75 million common shares at $35.25 a share. The offering is expected to close on Dec. 22. REUTERS

Business

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EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

TSX rides oil to higher close

Toronto's main stock index closed at its highest level in more than a week yesterday in a broad-based rally supported by a rebound in oil prices and optimism that stimulus measures around the globe would help avert a deeper slide in the economy.

The resource-heavy index, coming off a 12 per cent skid last week, surged at the open and hung on to the bulk of its gains as the price of oil bounced off of the four-year low set last week.

The Toronto Stock Exchange's S&P/TSX composite index closed 450.09 points, or 5.55 per cent, higher, at 8,567.12, with all of its 10 main sectors up.

Adding to the rally's momentum was a pledge by U.S. president-elect Barack Obama to invest in a massive infrastructure plan to help bolster the anemic U.S. economy.

Stock markets around the world rebounded yesterday, helped by several governments reinforcing their plans for countering the economic crisis, while higher oil prices gave an added boost. REUTERS

EnCana, Suncor rally

• Shares of EnCana Corp. shot 9.34 per cent higher to $55.61 and were the biggest driver of the TSX's gain. Suncor Energy rallied 6.59 per cent to close at $23.30.

Chicago **Workers stage sit-in**

FRANK POLICH/REUTERS

Gustavo Ramirez, an 11-year employee of Republic Windows & Doors, stands guard at the door to the business's warehouse in Chicago yesterday. Workers at the plant are staging a sit-in to protest the plant's closing without giving them advance notice, leaving the workers without state-mandated compensation.

Canada to finalize auto aid by late January: Clement

AUTOS The Canadian government aims to hammer out details of a multibillion-dollar aid package for the struggling auto industry by its next federal budget in late January, the federal industry minister said yesterday.

As the White House and U.S. Democrats moved toward a deal to rescue Detroit's Big Three automakers, valued as high as $15 billion US, federal Industry Minister Tony Clement said Ottawa would demand eventual payback of any money it contributes.

"We're looking at loans. We're looking at increasing the supply of credit."
Tony Clement

"None of us are considering a bailout without strings attached," Clement told the CBC. "We're looking at loans. We're looking at increasing the supply of credit, those kinds of things where we would get our money back for the taxpayer in years to come."

General Motors Corp., Ford Motor Co. and Chrysler LLC have asked the Canadian and Ontario governments for aid that reports have pegged at at least $6 billion. REUTERS

Business in brief

RESULTS H&R Block Inc., the largest U.S. tax preparer, yesterday posted a smaller second-quarter loss after shedding its money-losing mortgage operations to focus on its tax business. The net loss narrowed to $135.9 million US, or 41 cents per share, from a loss of $502.3 million, or $1.55, a year earlier, for the fiscal second quarter ended Oct 31. Revenue fell one per cent to $351.5 million, short of the average $386-million forecast. REUTERS

BCE boosted by positive second accounting opinion

TELECOM BCE Inc., the Canadian telecom giant whose $34.8-billion buyout appears close to collapse, has received a second accounting opinion that found it would be solvent after the deal is done, a source familiar with the situation said yesterday.

The source said BCE retained PricewaterhouseCoopers to provide a second solvency opinion. The move comes after BCE announced in November that KPMG, its accountants, had found the company would fail such a solvency test because of the huge debt load related to the deal.

In a statement late yesterday, BCE confirmed that PwC had been hired, but denied the accounting firm was engaged to provide a solvency opinion. Rather, BCE said, PwC would "perform valuation work in connection with the company's submissions to KPMG related to the solvency opinion."

A positive opinion from KPMG is a condition to the deal's closing, which is slated for Thursday. Without it, BCE has said the transaction is unlikely to proceed.

However, it wasn't immediately clear what impact PwC's opinion would have on the buyout. REUTERS

Buyers

• BCE's buyers, a group of private-equity funds led by the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, have offered $42.75 a share.

Trouble ahead for Canadian insurers in 2009: A.M. Best

FORECAST Insurance credit-rating agency A.M. Best Co. said yesterday that it believes "unprecedented negative financial conditions" will pose difficulties for Canadian life insurers well into 2009.

"Canadian life insurers are experiencing mounting pressures as the global financial crisis hampers their ability to maintain a conservative capital base as well as sustain the favourable revenue and earnings streams recorded in recent years," Best said in a commentary.

"Continued macroeconomic deterioration would lead to a change in outlook and negative rating changes."
A.M. Best Co.

Although the outlook is currently stable for "the vast majority" of Canadian life insurers, the rating agency said that this could change if the economy deteriorates, which would likely bring higher credit defaults, equity market volatility, lower consumer confidence and weaker product sales.

Best said it currently expects any negative rating actions to be company specific.

"However, continued macroeconomic deterioration would lead to a change in outlook and negative rating changes for the entire segment." REUTERS

Canada to meet its G7 duties: Flaherty

ECONOMY Finance Minister Jim Flaherty said yesterday that no specific action by any one government can make the global economic crisis disappear, but that Canada will continue to do its part.

Flaherty, who spoke to reporters after an event in Toronto, said Canada's government will continue to fulfill its obligations to stimulate its economy under an agreement by the Group of Seven most industrialized nations to try to reinvigorate the world economy.

He also said he has received input from the opposition Bloc Québécois about the Jan. 27 budget he is preparing, but has not received proposals from the Liberals or the New Democratic Party. REUTERS

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Nobleman vs. Doberman

Less fodder for Tory attacks with Iggy at Liberal helm

NationalReport

Lawrence Martin

So much for the Liberal leadership race. For all intents and purposes, it's over. The nightmare before Christmas — the political pandemonium of the last two weeks — has touched off a rush to anoint Michael Ignatieff as the new man.

Anointed he likely will be. The third candidate, Dominic LeBlanc, has exited the race and is throwing his support behind Iggy. A bandwagon effect is in course. The date of the convention, if there is one, will be being moved to January, meaning that Bob Rae, who needed time to stage a fight, won't have it. Without it, he is finished. His fundamental problem was that his baggage from his days as Ontario premier, 16 years ago, would not go away. Sometimes we forgive. Sometimes we don't. In his case, we didn't.

The installation of Mr. Ignatieff means that the luck of the Conservatives, who have feasted on Dion tenderloin for two years, is likely over.

Sir Michael has his own encumbrances. He is patrician, to the manor born, lacking in the common touch. He is inexperienced, having only been in politics for three years and he signed on, reluctantly, to the coalition deal. On the plus side, he is intellectually radiant and an effective communicator with a presence that is commanding. He knows that the most important thing in politics is messaging. Stephen Harper illustrated this last week when, in the space of a couple of days, he brilliantly changed the national discussion from his pathetic economic statement to national unity.

The installation of Mr. Ignatieff means that the luck of the Conservatives, who have feasted on Dion tenderloin for two years, is likely over.

The Conservatives will berate Mr. Ignatieff as an egghead and beat him up for signing the coalition pact. But his being new to politics means the fire-breathing Harper will have less ammunition on which to base cheap attack ads. While Bob Rae has many of the Iggy qualities and is much more seasoned, the Harper team would have unlimited gunpowder with him as Liberal leader.

Mr. Ignatieff is also situated more in the centre of the political spectrum and will end, for better or for worse, the leftward drift of the party. He will be in a strong position to rebuild the party in Quebec now that the prime minister has alienated so many in La Belle Province with his demonization of the Bloc Québécois.

With his impressive standing in the polls, Mr. Harper is probably tempted himself to push for an election. The public, caught up in politics to a degree seldom seen, might not be opposed to going to the polls again.

But with Mr. Dion stepping down, the chemistry changes. A new Liberal leader cannot probably help but move his party's numbers upward.

Mr. Ignatieff will move cautiously, easing off on any coalition commitment. A mighty chess match will ensue between him, a nobleman, and the prime minister, a Doberman.

Lawrence Martin is a Globe and Mail correspondent and author who writes about national affairs from Ottawa.

MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

How the coalition helped propel Harper in polls

Ezra Levant

The proposed Liberal-NDP-Bloc coalition government is as good as dead — gone as quickly as it was formed.

Just days after it was announced, Liberal MPs started distancing themselves from it. Then Stéphane Dion — the coalition's proposed prime minister — bungled a videotaped speech made for national TV. And then the Governor General granted Stephen Harper a breather by cancelling Parliament for a month.

But the real nails in the coffin are polls showing that Canadians deeply oppose the coalition. The scheme has backfired, and Harper has skyrocketed to his highest level of support yet. How could the opposition have miscalculated so badly?

Three reasons. Personal animosity towards Harper blinded the opposition. During the election, the opposition ran ads that were intensely personal, implying that Harper wasn't really Canadian.

The election debate was even harsher. The other leaders, sitting just feet away from him, looked him in the eye and called him a liar and incompetent.

That's their first mistake: The opposition thought that Canadians shared their hate for Harper — so much so that they'd accept any trick to kick him out of office, including a deal with the Bloc Québécois.

The second mistake was that the opposition listened to the media. Reporters tend to be liberal. But the Parliamentary press gallery has had a running feud with Harper — even going on "strike" for a while, when they didn't like how Harper chose which reporters' questions to answer. The media's first reaction to the coalition was excitement and support. But that elite opinion was formed in part by their own hostility to Harper.

But the biggest reason why the opposition got this one wrong is the inclusion of the Bloc in the deal. Simply put, Canadians are scared of them, and don't want separatists choosing our prime minister or having a veto over our government. Canadians found it shocking the opposition would do that.

When the Bloc was first formed in 1990, the Liberals and the media were just as appalled as everyone else. But over the past 18 years, as they've rubbed shoulders with Bloc MPs, they've become numb to their dangerous mission. To Ottawa, the Bloc is now normal. But to the rest of Canada, the whole thing is worse than bizarre — it is dangerous.

Signing a contract with Quebec separatists isn't normal in the eyes of Canadians — no matter what Harper-hating opposition MPs or their sympathetic media friends, say.

Ezra Levant is a lawyer, author and free-speech activist who blogs at www.ezralevant.com. He volunteered in the Conservative war-room during the last election.

Letters

Governor General erred in shutting down House

Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean made a serious error in shutting down Parliament.

From this point forward, any tin-pot leader to follow has a legal argument that they can suspend Parliament anytime it disagrees with a prime minister.

The voiding of Canadian Parliamentary democracy to Stephen Harper is a shocking and sad day.

EUGENE PARKS, VICTORIA

A hunger for politics

I am sure many of us did not know that there was a word called "prorogue" and we all learned something new with this coalition agreement.

While we were discussing the newly discovered word "prorogue," somebody said this word sounds like "pierogi/perogie." That was that — we got sudden craving for perogies, we decided to prorogue our session and go for a perogie break. I thought that was funny.

ANANT NAGPUR, OTTAWA

Proroguing shouldn't give Parliament paid vacation

While I support the prorogation of the government, I would like to see changes to the law governing the functioning of Parliament so that all members of the legislature will not collect pay while their functions are suspended.

It is incredible that the MPs will be having a paid vacation after not even two months of being elected and only days after returning to work. This kind of special treatment, compared to the one that the average worker gets, is in itself an incentive for parties to behave irresponsibly.

BILL FLORES, OAKVILLE, ONT.

Kudos to editorial cartoonist

I have particularly enjoyed the small editorial cartoons in Metro. Editorial cartoonists have a unique talent of highlighting the crux of the issue. Michael de Adder's cartoons are an invaluable addition to Metro and provide interesting and stimulating inclusion in our household.

FRANKLIN CHOW, OTTAWA

It's your turn to tell others what you think. E-mail your thoughts and opinions to: vancouverletters@metronews.ca
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Holidays

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2008 HOLIDAY PROGRAM GUIDE

CBC

December

Sunday 7
8 pm — Elf

Tuesday 9
8 pm — The Legend of Frosty

Wednesday 10
8 pm — The Santa Clause 1

Thursday 11
7 pm ET — Hockey Night In Canada
Tampa Bay at Montreal

Friday 12
8 pm — Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town

Sunday 14
5:30 pm — Disney's Eloise at Christmastime
7 pm — Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer
8 pm — The Polar Express

Monday 15
8 pm — Dr. Seuss: How the Grinch Stole Christmas
8:30 pm — Frosty The Snowman

Tuesday 16
8 pm — The Santa Clause 2

Wednesday 17
8 pm — Merry Christmas, Mr. Bean
8:30 pm — Frosty Returns
9 pm — Holiday Festival on Ice 2008

Thursday 18
7 pm ET — Hockey Night In Canada
Philadelphia at Montreal

Friday 19
8 pm — Secret of the Nutcracker
9:30 pm — Little Mosque on the Prairie Holiday Special

Sunday 21
5:30 pm — Disney's I'll Be Home For Christmas
7 pm — Disney's Mickey's Christmas Carol
7:30 pm — Dr. Seuss: How the Grinch Stole Christmas
8 pm — National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation
11 pm — John McDermott Sharing Christmas

Schedule subject to change. Check local listings.

Monday 22

8 pm — Disney's Winnie the Pooh & Christmas, Too

8:30 pm — Stewart McLean's Vinyl Café Christmas Pageant

1 am — Miracle on 34th Street (1947)

Tuesday 23

8 pm — Miracle on 34th Street (1994)

1 am — A Christmas Story

Wednesday 24

7 pm — It's A Wonderful Life

1 am — Scrooge

Thursday 25 Christmas Day

10 am — Walt Disney World Christmas Day Parade Featuring Steven & Chris

12 noon — Queen's Message

12:10 pm — Blizzard

2 pm — Jack Frost

4 pm — Olive The Other Reindeer

6 pm — My Song Is My Gift: A George Canyon Christmas

8 pm — Booky and the Secret Santa

1 am — White Christmas

Friday 26

8 pm — Celine

1 am — The Bells Of St. Mary's

Sunday 28

5 pm — Curious George

7 pm — March of the Penguins

9 pm — Holiday Festival on Ice 2008

Monday 29

8 pm — Cirque du Soleil: Kooza

Tuesday 30

8 pm — Finding Nemo

Wednesday 31 New Year's Eve

7 pm — Best of Just For Laughs

8 pm — Air Farce: New Year's Eve Special

9 pm — Ron James: Manitoba Bound

11 pm — The Hour: New Year's Eve Special

12:01 am — Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me

Thursday Jan 1

1 pm ET — 2009 NHL Winter Classic: Detroit at Chicago

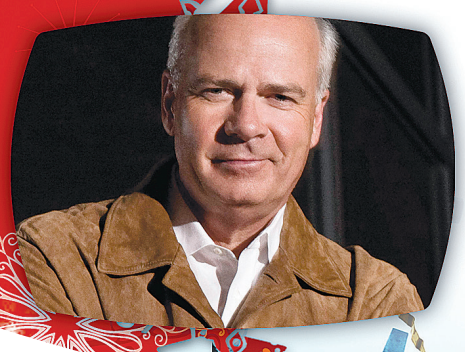
Favourite holiday specials

Amber Marshall: "A fond memory for me was being all snug and cozy by the fire, watching **Rudolph**."

Steven Sabados: "**How The Grinch Stole Christmas** is my all-time favourite. Even my Great Dane is named after the Grinch's dog - except my Max has never worn antlers."

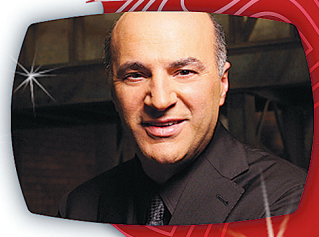
Chris Hyndman is man enough to admit that he loves getting into the holiday spirit with **The Polar Express**. "It makes me cry like a baby every time!"

Rick Mercer will enjoy watching **Ron James: Manitoba Bound** because "Ron is the funniest man in Canada."



Peter Mansbridge will ring in the New Year with **Air Farce's** special finale. "It's the team's final flight and it'll be a great celebration of laughs from the past."

George Stroumboulopoulos: "I like to spend the Christmas season with two families – my own, and the Griswold's.



Dragon **Kevin O'Leary** finds a personal connection in the holiday comedy **Scrooged**: "Most people think Scrooge is cheap. To me, he's just a smart and strategic business man."

Natalie Brown can quote almost every line like, "You'll shoot your eye out!" from her favourite holiday classic **A Christmas Story** – which was filmed in her second hometown of St. Catharines.

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Your Money

EDITOR: NINA DRAGICEVIC, NINA.DRAGICEVIC@METRONEWS.CA

Big gifts with small prices

SmartCookies

Shop for friends and family, the Smart Cookie way.

With gift giving in full swing, we thought we'd share our favourite gift ideas for the fabulous people on your list this year.

Sandra's Pick

Give the gift of experience and the opportunity to save big by giving the 2009 Entertainment book. For less than $50, the book is a collection of vouchers redeemable at both local & national businesses. Savings are available for a variety of sectors, including movies, restaurants, sporting events, travel, gasoline, and more!

For an added touch of thoughtfulness, flip through the book before wrapping and tag a few places you know the gift recipient would love to go. Check out *entertainment.com* to learn more.

Angela's Pick

For the fashionable and simply fabulous friend on your list, check out Cheeky Umbrella. Not only is each umbrella stylish and sturdy but each comes with a sassy statement scrolled along the underside ("When does it start raining men?" and "It's raining, it's pouring, other umbrellas are boring"). This gift is the perfect accessory to the rainy day wardrobe and sure to brighten even the darkest of days. Check it out at *cheekyumbrella.com*.

Katie's Pick

What better way to give a gift of all the memories you have shared than a photo album. Now you can digitally create your own photo book complete with a hard cover and sleeve. Apple and *Snapfish.com* offer fabulous products that allow you to drag and drop your photos into a work of art. An album can be completed within minutes and shipping can take as little as five business days. Photo books generally start around $20 depending on the format and number of pages you include.

Andrea's Pick

Nothing is more thoughtful (and as easy on your wallet) than something homemade. So this holiday season, why not grab some girlfriends and spend an evening drinking wine and baking up your own specialty dessert? Take four or five pieces of your homemade deliciousness, wrap it with some clear or coloured cellophane paper ($1 at your local dollar store), tie it off with some ribbon and voila — you have a gift for only $3 per bag. For Andrea's favourite fudge recipe, try googling "food network" and "old time chocolate fudge".

Robyn's Pick

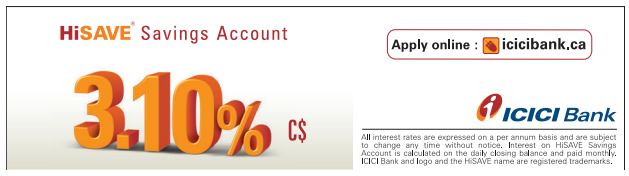
Of course you could check out *smartcookies.com* for ideas (we wouldn't be Smart Cookies if we didn't mention it). For just $5 a month, or $50 a year, you can get a premium subscription for your friend, your daughter, your wife or another other. Members will be able to download resources, create a spending plan, receive e-mail reminders regarding their financial and life goals, along with a free credit report, notices of special Smart Cookie offers and much much more.

If you have questions, e-mail us at *smartcookies@metronews.ca*.

Tune in Wednesday night at 9 p.m. EST/PST on the W Network and be sure to visit smartcookies.com for more tips.

Investing
Allan Small

The week's column looks at job losses and the restructuring of companies. Visit metronews.ca



Plant those tax seeds now

MoneyMatters
Henry Choo Chong

choochonghcga@yahoo.ca

Q I am self-employed and have always ran a successful business. Can you offer any tax advice before the end of this dismal year?

Paul

A As the holidays get closer, most Canadians are gearing up for shopping, vacations and festivities — not tax planning. However, a little time spent now may translate to substantial savings in the New Year. Try these tips:

- Consider paying families members that work in the business. They may be taxed at a lower marginal tax rate.
- Purchase assets for use in business before fiscal year-end. Although, you cannot deduct entire amount, CCA is available.
- Keep a close watch on your credit. Banks are reducing and, in some instances, retiring loans.
- Sell stocks with losses that you can apply to reduce realized capital gains in current year or past three years. Check with your broker.
- Pay yourself first. RRSP contributions not made by Dec. 31, 2008, can be made on or before March 2, 2009, for deduction in 2008.
- Donate to charitable organization before Dec. 31. If you donate stocks that have appreciated in past several years you pay may zero tax on capital gains and get a donation credit for contributions.

The last word! Banks should practice what they preach: Individuals should spend, spend, spend! However, banks must lend, lend, lend.

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Avery's future with Stars in doubt

Sean Avery's fate with the Dallas Stars could be decided by tomorrow. The team's brass will meet tomorrow afternoon to discuss the Avery situation in depth. Avery is currently serving a six-game suspension for making a crude remark last week. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports

Klassen won't race this season

Canadian speedskater Cindy Klassen, left, put the brakes on her return from knee surgery and has decided not to race this season. The winner of six Olympic medals wants time for her knees to heal before she steps to the start line again. The 29-year old Winnipeg native hasn't put her skates back on since arthroscopic surgery in July. Klassen says her priority remains the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Tonight

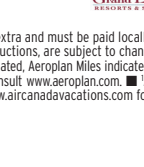
VS

5 p.m.
TV: Rogers Sportsnet
Radio: TEAM 1040

The Canucks play in Nashville for the first time this season, having defeated the Predators 4-0 in their only prior meeting on Nov. 4. Vancouver has lost four of five games on its current road trip, but picked up three points in its last two. Curtis Sanford will start in goal after watching Cory Schneider win in Minnesota on Friday and lose in a shootout to Colorado on Sunday.

YorkReport

Marty York



WILL RETURN

Toews says so long to soph slump

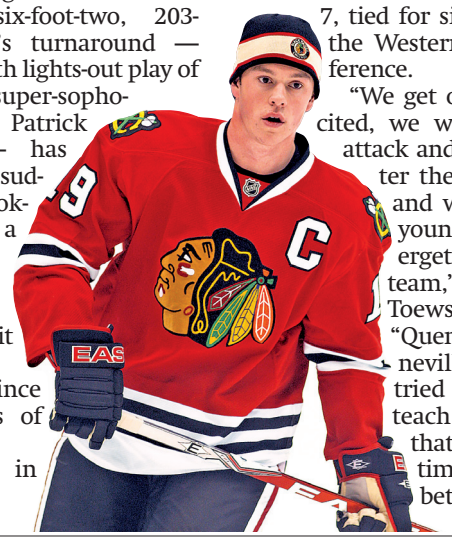
MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

Jonathan Toews had heard of sophomore slumps, but the Chicago Blackhawks forward didn't believe in them.

So when he started the year with no goals and just seven assists in his first 12 games, he didn't fret, even though he carried the weight of a franchise on his shoulders after being named one of the youngest captains in NHL history in July.

Instead, the Winnipeg native righted the ship. After scoring his first goal on Nov. 9, Toews has been flying high, with eight goals and seven assists in his past 13 games. He was named the NHL's second star of the week yesterday. "I think (after your rookie year), reality sets in where you're not in dreamland anymore," Toews said. "You've got to earn every point and every chance offensively, and every little thing that you do, you've got to work harder for it. "It's great to finally get through that."

The six-foot-two, 203-pounder's turnaround — along with lights-out play of fellow super-sophomore Patrick Kane — has Chicago suddenly looking like a playoff team, something it hasn't been since the days of Tony Amonte in 2002.



The Blackhawks actually struggled out of the gate, going 1-2-2, but fired head coach Denis Savard on Oct. 16 and replaced him with Joel Quenneville. That signalled a turnaround for a young, skilled team that needed to be reined in.

The Blackhawks are 12-6-7, tied for sixth in the Western Conference.

"We get overexcited, we want to attack and go after the puck, and we're a young, energetic team," Toews said. "Quenneville has tried to teach us that sometimes it's better just to sit back, relax and let the other team make mistakes."

Toews is battling a nasty cold this week, something he'll want to kick in the next few weeks. The Blackhawks will play an outdoor game — the Winter Classic — against the Detroit Red Wings on New Year's Day at Wrigley Field.

Toews watched last year's Winter Classic, played between the Pittsburgh Penguins and Buffalo Sabres before an NHL-record crowd of 71,217 at Ralph Wilson Stadium. Wrigley Field is expected to seat 41,000.

"There won't be 70,000 people at our game, but I think the energy's going to be similar," Toews said. "That whole kind of big-show atmosphere is going to be pretty cool to be a part of, and we're all looking forward to that."

Maddux retires with 355 wins

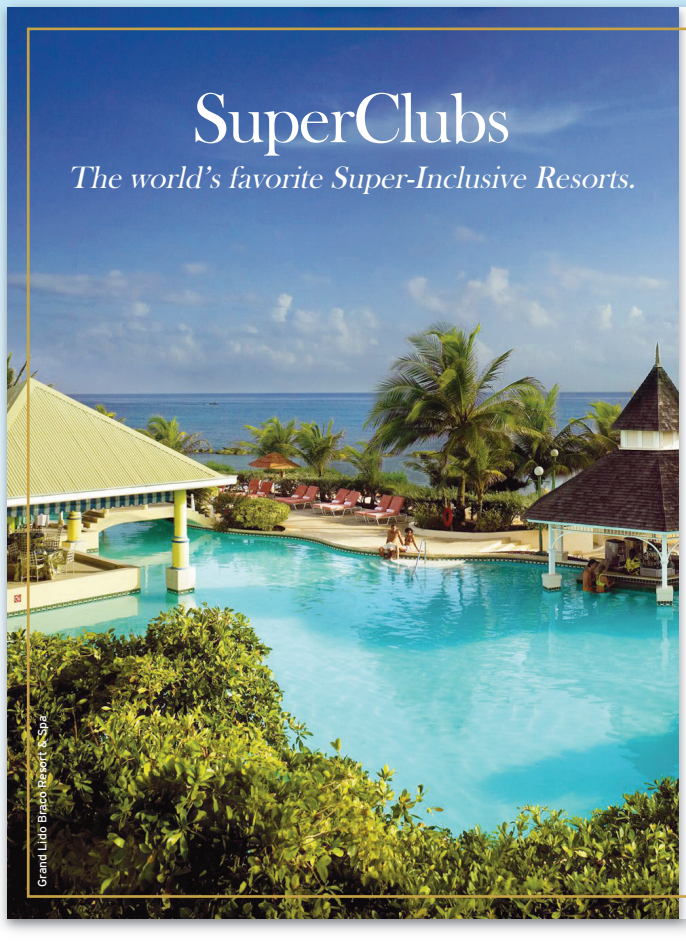
MLB Greg Maddux officially closed out his illustrious 23-year career by announcing his retirement yesterday at a news conference in his hometown of Las Vegas, the site of baseball's winter meetings. In 23 seasons with the Cubs, Braves, Padres and Dodgers, Maddux compiled a 355-227 record with a 3.16 ERA in 744 games — including 109 complete games and 35 shutouts. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Greg Maddux

Sports in brief

SOCCER The Whitecaps said yesterday that they will not offer contracts to Jeff Clarke and Steve Kindel, and won't exercise the 2009 option on Alfredo Valente. METRO NEWS SERVICES

AIR CANADA VACATIONS



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$1899
Taxes & fees: $260

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Jan. 2, 9 & 16 • 1 wk.
$1999
Taxes & fees: $260

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Health & Beauty

Avoid holiday weight gain

BRIAN TOWIE
brian.towie@metronews.ca

"A delicious Christmas dinner can contain as much as 3,500 calories, without drinks."
Susan B. Davis, registered dietician

Caution: You might put on more holiday weight than you plan for.

'Tis the season for indulgence: Christmas parties offer a plethora of candies, snacks and eggnog and that family dinner will more than likely consist of the classic favourites such as juicy turkey, turnip and mashed potatoes swimming in hearty gravy.

The holidays offer all kinds of easy opportunities to put on the "seasonal seven," or possibly the "seasonal-significantly-more-than-seven," but with a little restraint, you can minimize the jiggle that accompanies the jingle.

"A lot of people will have good eating habits going into the holidays and then say, 'Well, I can let it go for now and then get back on the horse after,' but those extra five to seven pounds are hard to face on Jan. 1," says Susan B. Davis, a Maine-based registered dietician and nutrition adviser for the Wild Blueberry Association.

"Stick with those good eating habits for as long as you can."

Mindless snacking often paves the road to ruin, says Davis. Since you're attending more parties this time of year, you'll be tempted by fattening hors d'oeuvres preceding a dinner.

Moderation is the key: Don't overdo it with appetizers if you've shown up for a calorie-loaded meal. When you do finally get to the main course, stay modest and limit your sauces. Smaller meat portions, salads and baked potatoes with no butter or cream can all control the damage and nourish, as can fruits, steamed vegetables and spinach with no cheese. Eat slowly and only when you're hungry.

"The arithmetic on what comes on versus what comes off is astounding," says Davis. "You can eat 1,000 to 1,500 calories without blinking. A delicious Christmas dinner can contain as much as 3,500 calories, without drinks. That can mean six hours on the elliptical machine just for one meal. It's a bear. You've got to either burn it up or eat less."

For every alcoholic drink, have one non-alcoholic drink, such as water, she advises. And while it's appropriate for the season, lay off the eggnog if you can.

"Out of the drinks you might have, that one in particular is a real diet killer," Davis says of the popular Christmas bevy. "Excess alcohol can contribute to sleep deprivation, which encourages weight gain. It's all connected."

The onus is on you to use the holiday time wisely, says Davis. When you're looking to watch your weight, there's no time like the present.

"The week between Christmas and New Year's is another week of indulgence. You might feel guilty about the leftovers in your fridge and overeat to use them all up," she said. "Give it to a food bank. You don't have to wait until New Year's to clean up your act. Use that week to get back to normal."

Smaller meat portions, salads and baked potatoes with no butter or cream can control the damage during the holidays.

Teens need comprehensive sex education

The J Spot

Controversy over a British plan to offer contraceptive injections to teenage girls as young as 13 has the usual knickers in a twist. Critics are concerned the plan will promote underage sex and help spread sexually transmitted diseases.

It's the same argument that gets hauled out against sex education. As if young people never think about sex until an adult comes along, rips open a condom in front of them and shows them how to use it.

The truth is, in today's sexually saturated culture, kids are exposed to more information about sex than ever before and sound, comprehensive sex education starting at a young age is crucial.

Besides, it seems to be working. Despite popular belief, in recent years, teenage pregnancy rates have fallen and the age of first sex has risen in both the U.S. and Canada. Even in England, teen pregnancies are down overall, except in high-risk, usually low-income areas that are being targeted for this program.

Also, it's not like they're running around, capturing 13-year-olds and forcefully injecting them with Depo-Provera, the contraceptive being used for the program that prevents pregnancy for three months at a time. The injections are being offered by trained professionals that talk to these girls about why they are having sex and explain the risks of sexually transmitted infections.

Rather than panicking that we're encouraging girls as young as 13 to have sex by offering them contraception, isn't it better to admit that some are having sex and offer them education and options?

Josey Vogels is a sex and relationship columnist and author of five books on the subjects. For more info, visit joseyvogels.com.

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Twilight director snubbed

Twilight director Catherine Hardwicke has reportedly been turned down as director of the smash hit vampire film's sequel New Moon, despite vocalizing her desire to be involved with the project. IMDB.COM

Entertainment

New Order

Actor Jamie Bamber has returned to his native Britain to star in the latest Law & Order spinoff. Bamber will front Law & Order: London, the popular detective series' first international show. IMDB.COM

EDITOR: TINA COSTANZA, TINA.COSTANZA@METRONEWS.CA

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Madagascar ends 007's foreign rule

MOVIES A batch of Central Park zoo animals returning to their jungle habitat ended James Bond's five-week domination of the international box office.

Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa, which began a record-busting rollout in late October in eastern Europe, roared to an estimated $52.2 US million from 35 territories during the weekend. The film's foreign gross soared to $125 million. In the U.K., the zoo brigade charged in at No. 1 to $9.5 million. The animated entry also was No. 1 in Germany ($11 million), France ($9.8 million), Mexico ($4.2 million). REUTERS

This guy can dance

RICK MCGINNIS
Metro Canada

After 13 weeks moving slowly toward centre stage on the biggest TV show in Canada, Montreal's Nico Archambault became the first winner of the homegrown version of So You Think You Can Dance, though talking to him a day after his win, he admits he was sure he was going home weeks ago.

"I never felt safe," he tells me. "You can get a lot of praise and then if you mess up the next week you're done. I have to say after my waltz I thought I was going to leave. The standard ballroom is hard. For a start, it's not really entertaining, and it looks easy, but it's not. People say 'why did you mess it up, it looks so easy.'"

RICK MCGINNIS/METRO CANADA

Nico Archambault, winner of the first season of So You Think You Can Dance Canada.

With a background in hip hop and contemporary, he says that he felt like he had the basics to take on the show's weekly challenges, but that his first big test came right after he made it into the top 10. "The first week I picked salsa, which is totally new to me, and I'm partnering the Cuban girl (Arrasay Reyes)," he recalls. "But she was really good, and she was patient and really helped me."

Looking back, the standard ballroom dances were his biggest challenge, coming from a place utterly different from his training and taste, but he answers immediately when I ask him about what scared him the most. "It's gotta be the quickstep," he says. "I would never have done that. I wouldn't want to do it — honestly, from an outside point of view, and me coming from a contemporary and hip-hop background, I like everything that is twisted, quirky, dirty, weird. I like that. This is me.

"To me all the standard ballroom looked boring — I have to say it. But the show forces you to step into it, to embrace it, because you're going to be onstage performing it after five hours of rehearsal, so you'd better get into it. And by doing it I realized how hard it is — it's not natural for a body to look like that, and to move with another body."

"I never felt safe. You can get a lot of praise and then if you mess up the next week you're done."
Nico Archambault

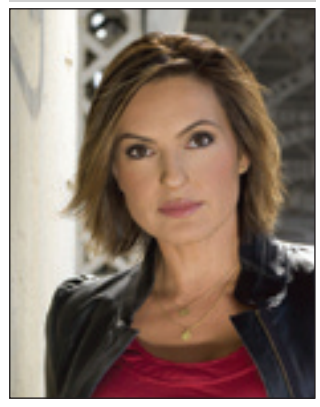
Right now, his next gig is the cross-Canada tour for the show, but he admits that his schedule gets a lot more vague after that. "I don't know, and I like it. I'm really excited to see what's going to happen. There's already people on the show — judges and choreographers — who've said they want to work with me. I need to move around and see different stuff and do different projects."

VA	Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 12/9/08	251	308	3 CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Legend of Frosty		The Tudors (CC)		CBC News: The National (N)		(:05) The Hour
	255	358	6 JOY	E! News	The Insider	The Biggest Loser: Families (N) (CC)				The Best Years		News (N)
	254	-	8 M	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Omni News: Mandarin Edition		News: Cantonese Edition		Omni News: Punjabi Edition		Metropia
	250	321	9 CTV	etalk (CC)	Hollywood	Shrek ★★★ (2001, Comedy) Voices of Mike Myers. (CC)				Law & Order: SVU		News (N)
	-	-	10 OMNI	Scrubs (CC)	According-Jim	Islam 101 (CC)		9B (CC)		The Daily	The Search	New Day
	252	336	11 GTV	Entertainment	ET Canada	House "Joy to the World" (N)		(:01) NCIS "About Face"		Kitchen Nightmares (CC)		News (N)
	256	389	12 VI	Instant Star	TMZ (N) (CC)	Funniest Home Videos		Fringe "The Ghost Network"		Eli Stone "Help!" (N) (CC)		News (CC)
	253	359	13 CITY	Law & Order: SVU		Privileged (CC)		According-Jim	According-Jim	Hates Chris	Friends (CC)	EP Daily
	-	-	14 CW	Deal-No Deal	Deal-No Deal	90210 (CC)		Privileged (CC)		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Frasier (CC)
	289	381	15 CBS	Entertainment	The Insider	NCIS "About Face" (CC)		The Mentalist "Red Tide"		Without a Trace (CC)		News (N)
	287	379	16 NBC	Evening Mag.	Inside Edition	The Biggest Loser: Families (N) (CC)				Law & Order: SVU		News (N)
	602	568	19 W	Will & Grace	Friends (CC)	How to Look Good Naked		Style by Jury	Style by Jury	How to Look Good Naked (N)		Maxed Out
	288	380	21 ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Funniest Home Videos		According-Jim	According-Jim	Eli Stone "Help!" (N) (CC)		KOMO 4 News
	-	-	23 KVOS	M*A*S*H	Seinfeld	Boogeyman ★★ (2005) Barry Watson, Emily Deschanel.				King	Still Standing	Scrubs (CC)
	291	383	27 PBS	Steves Europe	About-Money	Alone in the Wilderness (CC) (DVS)			Victor Borge: 100 Years of Music & Laughter!			Rich Forever
	290	382	28 FOX	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	House "Joy to the World" (N)		(:01) Fringe (CC)		News (N) (CC)		Family Guy
	-	364	48 PBS	(6:30) Great Performances (CC)			Vox Lumiere the Hunchback of Notre Dame (CC)				Box Office	Insider Europe
	296	654	34 SBK	Frasier (CC)	Frasier (CC)	Punk'd (CC)	South Park	Cheers (CC)	Half & Half	The Insider	Entertainment	Paid Program
	298	653	35 TLA	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	90210 (CC)		Privileged (CC)		KTLA Prime News (CC)		Friends (CC)
	295	651	36 WGN	WGN News at Nine (N) (CC)		Family Guy	Two/Half Men	According-Jim	Sex and-City	Friends (CC)	Will & Grace	My Wife-Kids
	297	652	37 WPX	CW11 News at Ten (N) (CC)		Two/Half Men	Friends (CC)	Sex and-City	Will & Grace	According-Jim	Frasier (CC)	Odd Couple
	199	311	76 STR	News (N)	News		Late Show-Letterman		(:37) The Biggest Loser: Families (CC)			Will & Grace
news	502	390	26 NW	Capturing a Short Life (N)		CBC News: The National (N)		CBC News: The National		Capturing a Short Life (CC)		National
	500	500	33 CNN	Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)				Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)		Cooper 360
sports	407	419	22 RSP	NHL Hockey	Canucks	Hockey	World Sport	Best Damn Sports Show		Sportsnet Connected (Live)		Sportsnet
	400	400	30 TSN	SportsCentre	That's Hockey	SportsCentre	In This Corner	UEFA Champions League Soccer Barcelona vs. Shakhtar.				SportsCentre
	411	457	49 OLN	Which Way to... "Luxor"		Pilot Guides (CC)		Don't Forget Your Passport		Survivorman (CC)		Angry Planet
	410	403	54 SCR	Score Tonight		Hardcore Hockey Talk		Final Score	Final Score	Final Score	Final Score	Final Score
	417	406	55 SC	Unique Whips	Hot Import	Pinks	Pass Time	Low Life	Low Life	Super Bikes!	Super Bikes!	Unique Whips
	416	409	144 GLF	Fútbol Alemán: Equipos SA		Gol TV News		Hallo Bundesliga		Paid Program	Kings Club	Gol TV News
family	552	543	25 YTV	Malcolm-Mid.	Home Imp.	Fresh Prince	Sabrina-Witch	Futurama	Prank Patrol	Mystery Hnt.	Adrenaline	Mystery Hnt.
	555	545	50 TEL	Santa Claus	Bugs Bunny & Tweety Show		Wayside	Johnny Test	Futurama	American Dad	Chicken	Rick & Steve
	557	541	51 FAM	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
	553	546	56 TRE	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie	Beren. Bears	Babar (CC)	Backyard	Dora-Explorer	Go, Diego, Go!	Franklin	Comfy Couch
cable variety	268	354	5 KNO	Gardens	Recreat. Eden	Sacred Music (N) (CC)		The Museum	Art	To See If I'm Smiling (N)		Full Cover Girl
	575	583	20 CMT	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Cheerleaders	Cheerleaders	Home Imp.	Home Imp.	Reba (CC)	Reba (CC)	Hope & Faith
	570	580	24 MM	You Can Dance		MuchTopTens (CC)		Pimp My Ride	disBand	Technical Diff.	Video on Trial	Video on Trial
	600	564	29 H&G	Colin & Justin's Home Heist		Holmes on Homes (CC)		Sarah's House	Design Inc.	Pure Design	Style	Colin-Justin
	615	520	31 A&E	Manhunters	Manhunters	Jacked: Theft	Jacked: Theft	The First 48 (CC)		The First 48 (CC)		Manhunters
	628	584	32 SPKE	UFC Unleashed		MANswers (N)	MANswers	CSI: NY "Open and Shut"		Star Trek: Voyager (CC)		Deep Space 9
	521	560	34 TLC	Dr. G: Medical Examiner		My Shocking Story (CC)		Mystery Diagnosis (CC)		Dr. G: Medical Examiner		My Own Twin
	616	522	39 SHO	About a Girl	About a Girl	The Best Years "Notorious"		Testees (N)	Trailer Park	House "Insensitive" (CC)		House (CC)
	620	523	40 BVO	Christmas at the Concert Hall		Law & Order (CC)		Without a Trace "Trip Box"		Christmas at the Concert Hall		Barenaked
	601	562	41 SLC	Tori & Dean: Home		ET Canada	Matchmaker	Tori & Dean: Home		Trading Spouses		Biggest Loser
	520	505	42 DIS	Dirty Jobs "Alpaca Shearer"		Daily Planet (CC)		Destroyed	Destroyed	Dirty Jobs "Alpaca Shearer"		How It's Made
	522	506	44 HIS	NCIS "Silver War" (CC)		Outlaw Bikers (CC)		Ax Men "Loggers Under Fire"		NCIS "Silver War" (CC)		Crime Stories
	627	528	45 SPC	Rabbit Fall (N)	The Circuit	Stargate SG-1 "Solitudes"		Lost "The Cost of Living"		Star Trek: Deep Space Nine		Star Trek
	294	650	47 TBS	The Office	The Office	Frank TV (N)	Sex and-City	Sex and-City	King	Blue Collar Comedy		Frank TV
	619	525	48 TROP	Beverly Hills, 90210 (CC)		Planet Soap	What	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	King	Family Guy
	603	561	52 FN	Chef School	At the Table	Restaurant Makeover (CC)		Challenge (CC)		The F Word (CC)		Chef School
	626	547	57 COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs (CC)		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	S. Silverman	Flt.-Conchords	Daily Show
	320	621	60 CEN	The Tracey Fragments ★★ (2007) (CC)			Cyborg Soldier (2008) Bruce Greenwood. (CC)			The Astronaut Farmer ★★ (2007) (CC)		
	581	566	101 MTV	A Double Shot of Love (CC)		MTV Live	After	Dance Life	Dance Life	A Double Shot of Love (CC)		MTV Live
	261	394	102 V	Quantum Leap		Mysterious Ways (CC)		Quantum Leap Evil leaper.		Quantum Leap		Paid Program
	-	-	109 MUL	Matchmaker	Mom's-Upset	Officina Italian	Qui si Parla	In Germany	Euromaxx	Schauplatz	Euro. Journal	Patrol World

critics' corner

Law & Order: Special Victims Unit

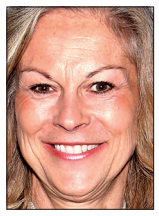
A woman is found in Riverside Park, beaten and raped with no memory of what happened. Detectives Benson and Stabler (Mariska Hargitay, Christopher Meloni) discover she was on her way to Korea but never boarded the plane and was instead seen leaving the airport with a mystery man. He becomes an immediate suspect, and with further probing, the detectives find amateur pornographic videos on his computer. And the women in the videos also suffer from memory loss. 10 PM on CTV, NBC



Barenaked for the Holidays

Hey, to each his own, right? No, nobody is getting naked in this special. A repeat holiday favorite, the band Barenaked Ladies performs songs from its CD of holiday tunes. Numbers include original Christmas songs, skewed versions of traditional ones and a few of the group's standards. 6 PM on BVO

Christie Hefner out at Playboy



Hefner

Christie Hefner, daughter of Playboy founder Hugh Hefner, plans to step down next year as chairman and chief executive of Playboy Enterprises after two decades on the job, the adult entertainment company said yesterday.

Shares of Playboy rose 14 per cent in morning trading after Hefner, 56, said she would relinquish her role as CEO on Jan. 31. She will stay on the company's board until a new CEO joins Playboy, which publishes one of the world's best-known adult magazines.

"Last month marked my 20th anniversary as CEO; just as this country is embracing change in the form of new leadership, I have decided that now is the time to make changes in my own life as well," Hefner said in a statement.

Like many magazines, Playboy has a brand name that is more widely known than read. Circulation has fallen as more people looking for adult entertainment online. REUTERS

Backstabbing in boardrooms

IntelleVision

Rick McGinnis

rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

THE NETWORK THAT WENT CRAZY: I'm not sure how much readers care about the Rome-at-empire's-end court politics at the number four U.S. network; I have to write about TV five days a week, so it's probably no surprise that this sort of flailing folly of backstabbing and corporate intrigue fascinated me.

My source, as usual, is Nikki Finke of L.A. Weekly, whose fascination with Ben Silverman's tenure as co-chairman of NBC entertainment and television makes mine seem restrained. Following up on her earlier predictions of heads rolling in time for the holidays, she managed to preempt Silverman's own attempt to hide the firing of three senior programming executives in the hurly-burly of holiday news.

"The network/studio hoped to then spin this as part of cost-cutting rather than more evidence of failure," writes Finke. "But I messed up their plans. My bad."

The basic news is that NBC management has shifted the blame for their underperforming season on two women and one man — the heads of executive vice-president of NBC Entertainment, the president of Universal Studio Media and the head of reality programming respectively.

Katherine Pope had wanted to leave the network for a year, ever since half of her job at Universal Studio Media was given away, and Teri Weinberg, who was brought to the company by Silverman, has been marked for death ever since the network had to give a sweetheart kiss-off deal to a group of writer/producers, one of whom was Weinberg's boyfriend. Craig Plestis, the man in charge of NBC's reality programs, was let go because, well, do I need to utter the dreaded words Baby Borrowers aloud?

When things are as bad as they've become for NBC, rational explanations no longer hold sway — Pope was apparently more than competent at what she did but Silverman apparently hated her, while Silverman's bulletproof status can be explained as a simple by-product of General Electric CEO Jeffrey Immelt's fondness for his favourite executive party boy.

For his part, Silverman is bringing in Paul Telegdy from the BBC to take Plestis' job so that Silverman will feel like he has "another dude" and "more friends" around him, according to Finke. Proof, were it needed, that high school never really ends, just summer vacation.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

GlobalStyle

Kenya Hunt

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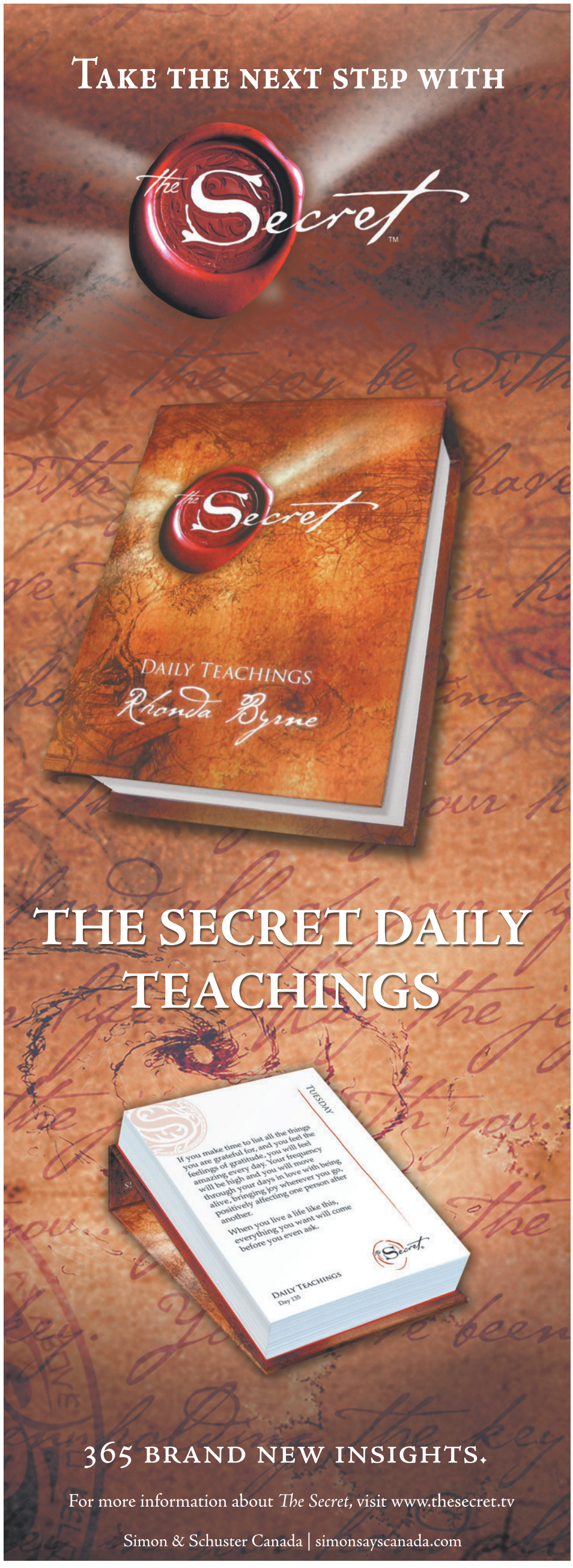


Steve-o to try hand at Dancing With The Stars
Jackass star Steve-o has been tapped as the next celebrity to join the cast of the hit TV show Dancing With The Stars, according to reports. **IMDB.COM**

Celebrity Buzz

Lohan's pricey leggings a hit

CLOTHING Actress Lindsay Lohan has managed to defy the global economic downturn — her new line of leggings have sold out in boutiques across the world, imdb.com reports.

The leggings from her 6126 collection range in price from $44 to $132 US and come in 35 colours and patterns.

They are said to have scored record sales in U.S. stores including Henri Bendel, Nordstrom, Intermix and Lisa Kline.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Dane rescues injured pooch

PEOPLE Grey's Anatomy star Eric Dane nursed an injured chihuahua back to health when the little dog's guardian tossed her from a moving car, imdb.com reports.

The pooch suffered a broken leg and was limping around L.A.'s Larchmont shopping district when Dane spotted it.

"My wife thought I was the sweetest guy in the world for taking that dog, until I told her to take care of the dog."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

I'll strip down for Bertolucci: Emma

CAREER Actress Emma Watson is willing to be naked on the big screen, as long as she is directed by acclaimed filmmaker Bernardo Bertolucci, imdb.com reports.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Allen renounces party-girl ways

PEOPLE Don't expect one-time party girl Lily Allen to stumble out of a club anytime soon, People.com reports.

"I've become a character in a comic … and that character is always drunk! I wish my comic character wasn't that," the singer told the U.K.'s Observer Music Monthly.

Allen claims she's been off alcohol "since 22 September," and doesn't plan on indulging again — at least for now.

"I have no intention of taking drugs again at the moment," she said. "But I can't say 'Never again,' because I don't know where I'll be in 10 years' time. And I will definitely drink in the future, just not for awhile."

Gearing up for the release of her second studio album It's Not Me, It's You, the 23-year-old continues to battle insecurities with her weight and appearance.

"My mum always told me, 'You're beautiful, you're my beautiful little girl,' and then suddenly I wasn't," she said. "I read all the stuff that people were writing about me and I started to get a different view. I mean, I never thought I was supermodel or anything, but I didn't think I was quite as unattractive as people were saying!" METRO NEWS SERVICES

Money woes may have ruined union

BREAKUP Actress Jodie Sweetin's marriage to Cody Herpin broke down following the near foreclosure of their home and a range of money woes, according to U.S. reports.

The former Full House star, 26, filed for legal separation from Herpin, 31, in November, just seven months after giving birth to the couple's first child, imdb.com reports.

In court documents, obtained by People.com, Sweetin blames her estranged husband's lack of employment as the main factor behind their relationship troubles.

"Our house is in foreclosure, our water has been shut off twice. Currently, all of our other utilities are overdue," Sweetin states. "(Herpin) kept finding one excuse after another for his failure to even attempt to find employment."

According to People.com, Sweetin also claims the couple were surviving from residuals from Full House re-runs and help from her parents.

Sweetin has filed for joint custody of their baby daughter Zoie. A hearing for the case is set for Feb. 9.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Aniston proves teacher wrong

CAREER Jennifer Aniston partly owes her success to a harsh teacher who insisted she'd never make it as an actress, imdb.com reports.

The former Friends star was ridiculed and slated by the coach during her school days, and set out to prove him wrong.

"I was in the High School of Performing Arts and my acting coach told me that I was a disgrace to the Moscow Theatre," Aniston says. "I was determined to prove him wrong and do good work."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

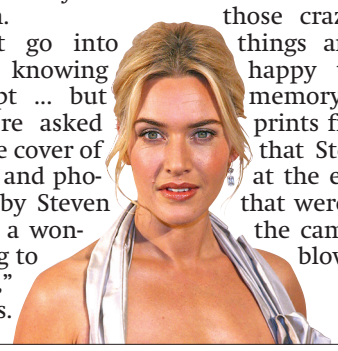
GETTY IMAGE PHOTOS

Kate dismisses photo-op qualms

PEOPLE Kate Winslet balked at the idea of stripping off for a new Vanity Fair photo shoot until she realized photographer Steven Meisel, the man behind the shots in Madonna's Sex book, would be behind the lens, imdb.com reports.

Winslet's reservations quickly disappeared as she reminded herself what a great opportunity she was being given.

"I didn't go into that shoot knowing the concept … but when you're asked to be on the cover of Vanity Fair and photographed by Steven Meisel, it's a wonderful thing to experience," she says. "It's a fantastic opportunity just to be able to have that memory in your lifetime … I thought, 'Yeah, dammit, I am; I'm 33, I've had two kids, Steven Meisel is taking pictures of me naked. This is never gonna happen again!' I transported myself 30 years on and I wanted to be able to say, 'Yeah, I did that.' That was one of those crazy, wonderful things and I'm really happy to have that memory. I have the prints from the shoot that Steven gave me at the end of the day that were taken out of the camera and were blown up."



METRO NEWS SERVICES

Hubby wants $1.46M from Amy?

BREAKUP The husband of singer Amy Winehouse is reportedly demanding a $1.46-million US payoff to keep quiet about their marriage, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

Blake Fielder-Civil vowed last month to split from Winehouse to help her win her alleged struggle with drugs. But according to a British tabloid, he has now demanded cash from the singer's manager and threatened to write a tell-all book about his relationship with Winehouse if he isn't paid.

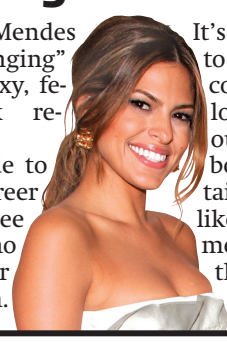
"He's so two-faced. He just wants a payoff. Money's his driving force," a source tells Britain's News of the World.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Belonging to men sexy: Eva

DATING Eva Mendes thinks "belonging" to a man is sexy, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

"The flip side to this strong career woman you see is a woman who loves being her man's woman. It's just sexy to belong to a man," she says. "Of course, we don't belong to anyone but ourselves, but how boring. There's a certain part of me that's like, 'Please take care of me.' It's just a natural thing."



METRO NEWS SERVICES

The Weather Network
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Today: Rain 90% 7°/ 5°
Wednesday: Rain 80% 9° / 4°
Thursday: Variable 8° / 4°

WeatherEye... Free App Available on iPhone.

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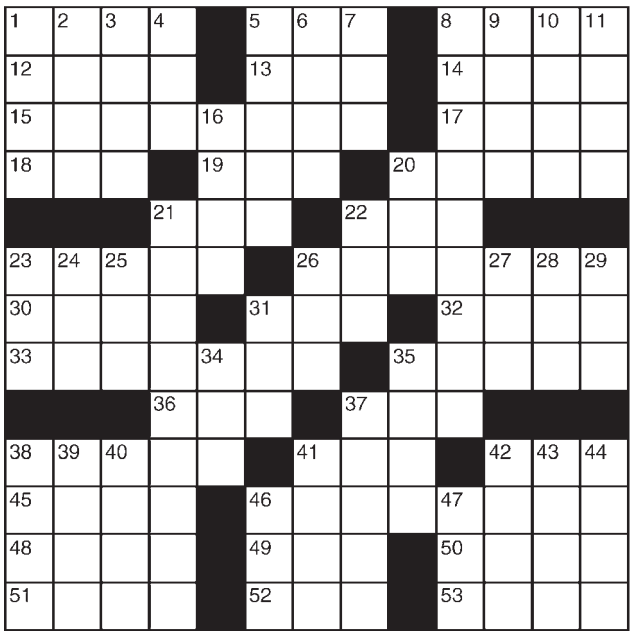
Take Five



Crossword across

1 Group of actors
5 Where Goldilocks was found
8 Tracy or Cheney
12 Leer at
13 "— not choose to run"
14 Inactive
15 "Silent Cal"
17 Peruse
18 Birthday card info
19 Palin portrayer on "SNL"
20 Goes nowhere
21 Toward the stern
22 Purchase
23 Popeye's burger-eating chum
26 Small car
30 State
31 Candle matter
32 Smell
33 Dweller
35 Harrelson of "Cheers"
36 Cover
37 Crony
38 Air current
41 Wahine's neckwear
42 Ring decision
45 Lira replacer
46 Backyard structure
48 Building-block name
49 A billion years
50 Pay attention
51 Pedestal occupant
52 Poehler or Yasbeck
53 Congers, e.g.

Crossword down

1 Caesar's TV co-star
2 Enthusiastic, plus
3 — gin fizz
4 Aviv lead-in
5 Lavatory fixture
6 Nervous
7 Fawn's mama
8 Cheating
9 Notion
10 Sculpture medium
11 Sneakers brand
16 Dubious
20 Total
21 Prankster's cry
22 Carton
23 Bankroll
24 "— Got a Secret"
25 Chaps
26 Drop from the payroll
27 Big bother
28 Massachusetts cape
29 Take a whack at
31 Marry
34 Acne evidence
35 Banshee's call
37 Garden
38 Sandwich shop
39 Regretted
40 Jason's ship
41 Appear ominously
42 Quaker's address
43 Carina
44 Probability
46 Afternoon get-together
47 That woman

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

6								3
1			5		8			6
		9	3	2	6	4		
	8		6		4		7	
	9						3	
	6		9		7		8	
		2	8	1	3	7		
9			7		5			8
3								5

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

H	A	M	■	■	F	O	B	■	C	H	A	D
E	P	I	C	■	C	A	L	■	H	O	S	E
R	I	C	H	■	C	H	I	■	A	P	S	E
R	E	H	A	B	■	U	S	S	R	■	■	■
■	■	■	R	E	D	■	S	U	L	T	A	N
B	O	I	L	E	R	S	■	P	I	A	N	O
A	N	T	I	■	Y	E	A	■	E	R	N	E
S	T	E	E	L	■	C	R	Y	S	T	A	L
S	O	M	B	E	R	■	M	A	H	■	■	■
■	■	■	R	E	E	D	■	K	E	B	A	B
Z	E	R	O	■	A	I	L	■	E	R	G	O
A	V	O	W	■	C	R	Y	■	N	E	R	O
P	E	O	N	■	T	E	E	■	■	D	A	B

5	4	7	9	2	1	6	8	3
8	3	6	7	4	5	1	9	2
2	1	9	3	8	6	5	4	7
1	8	2	5	6	7	9	3	4
4	6	3	1	9	8	2	7	5
7	9	5	4	3	2	8	1	6
6	5	4	8	1	3	7	2	9
9	2	8	6	7	4	3	5	1
3	7	1	2	5	9	4	6	8

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:

Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Lamb Racks with Garlic And Rosemary

INGREDIENTS:

4 lamb racks (with 3 cutlets per rack)
2 garlic cloves, sliced
2 long sprigs of fresh rosemary
1 tbsp (15 mL) honey
2 tbsp (25 mL) grainy mustard
2 tbsp (25 mL) mint sauce

METHOD:

1. Preheat the oven to 400˚F (200˚C). Trim excess fat from lamb racks. Cut small slits in top of lamb with a small, sharp knife. Insert slices of garlic and small pieces of rosemary into slits. Sit lamb on a plate.
2. Whisk together honey, grainy mustard and mint sauce, and brush over lamb racks. Marinate for 20 minutes in a cool place.
3. Put lamb racks into a baking dish and spoon on sauce that may be left on plate. Bake for 20 minutes for medium-rare, or until cooked to your liking, basting a couple of times during cooking with honey-mustard mixture.
4. Remove from oven and let stand, covered, in a warm place for 10 minutes to allow juices to be absorbed back into meat. Either cut lamb into individual cutlets or leave rack intact and serve as is.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
A lively person makes headway with a sad guy. There'll be much ado about nothing. Euphoria figures prominently in your plans.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Your thrill-seeking ways will be discussed. Disturbing feelings will cause distress. A friend relies on your sensible advice.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Avoid spending too much time seeking good luck. Relationship issues will be cleared up. An improvement causes second thoughts.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
A lively friend's emotions should be investigated. The least said about a problem, the better. Gossip is overheard by a busybody.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
A relationship improves after someone gets his first choice. Desperate measures will be taken. Chatter about your objectives comes up.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Time passes too quickly when you're arguing. Someone will agonize over forgiveness. Defensive strategies will be maddening.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
Protect children from hypocritical behaviour. You will have a few hours of hopefulness. Prepare for an unconventional gift.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
A crisis is the foundation of future opportunities. Someone will have mechanical problems. A senior will interfere with an appointment.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
A desired object will seem flawed. Unleash The Force on a second-rate bore. Be cool when you're correct about an intolerant person.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
An insomniac will reveal too much. Prepare to investigate a death for its relevance. Expect to get a surprising message.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
You'll be on top of the world. A certain situation will help to pay your bills. A dispute will be erased by an affable associate.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
A dream about the news will come true. A rebellion against routine activity occurs. A peacemaker's persona won't be comforting.

This day in history

DEC. 9, 1851: The first YMCA in North America is established in Montreal, Quebec.
DEC. 9, 1905: In France, the law separating church and state is passed.
DEC. 9, 1953: Red Scare: General Electric announces that all communist employees will be discharged from the company.
DEC. 9, 1965: The Kecksburg UFO incident: A fireball is seen from Michigan to Pennsylvania; witnesses report something crashing in the woods near Pittsburgh. In 2005, NASA admits it examined an object.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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WORDY GURDY®

BY TRICKY RICKY KANE

Every answer is a rhyming pair of words (like FAT CAT and DOUBLE TROUBLE), and they will fit in the letter squares. The number after the definition tells you how many syllables in each word.

1. Pass on having salsa or guacamole (1)
2. Valentine shape drawing or painting (1)
3. Lowered a tiered bed to the seabed (1)
4. Traveler Marco's string neckties (2)
5. Folk singer Mitchell's old pals (2)
6. Smoothie-making appliance seller (2)
7. Far-behind race runner reeled (2)

ANSWERS
1. SKIP DIP 2. HEART ART 3. SUNK BUNK 4. POLOS BOLOS
5. JONIS CRONIES 6. BLENDER VENDOR 7. LAGGARD STAGGERED

12-9-08

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